

Alaska Visitor Statistics Program V Interim Visitor Volume Report

Fall/Winter 2008-09

Prepared for:

State of Alaska

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Key Findings

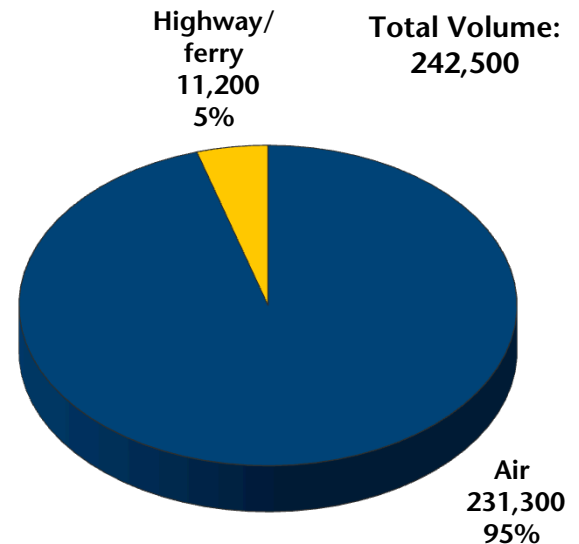
Visitor Volume, Fall/Winter 2008-09

An estimated 242,500 out-of-state visitors came to Alaska between October 2008 and April 2009. Nearly all of these visitors (95 percent) exited the state via airplane, while 5 percent exited highway or ferry. This pattern differs significantly from the summer, when about half of Alaska visitors exit the state via cruise ship.

Changes 2008-08 to 2008-09

Fall/winter 2008-09 saw a slight (2.0 percent) decrease in visitor volume from fall/winter 2007-08. Air visitor exits were down by 1.9 percent, and highway visitor exits were down by 4.0 percent. While ferry volume increased, it had little impact on overall volume, as ferry exits represent less than 1 percent of all fall/winter visitors.

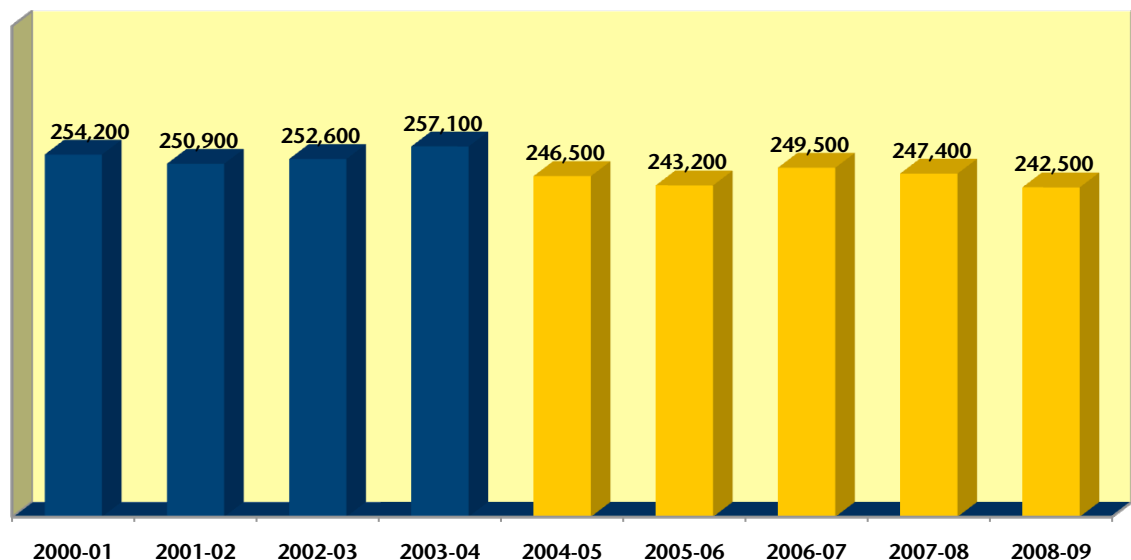
Alaska Visitor Volume, Fall/Winter 2008-09
By Exit Mode



Visitor Volume Trends

The chart below shows trends in estimated visitor volume, measured by mode of entry (2000-01 to 2003-04) and exit (2004-05 to 2008-09). Fall/winter visitation has fluctuated only slightly over the years. An increase in 2006-07 of 2.6 percent was followed by a decrease of 0.8 percent in 2007-08 and another of 2.0 percent in 2008-09.

Fall/Winter Visitor Volume, 2000-01 to 2008-09



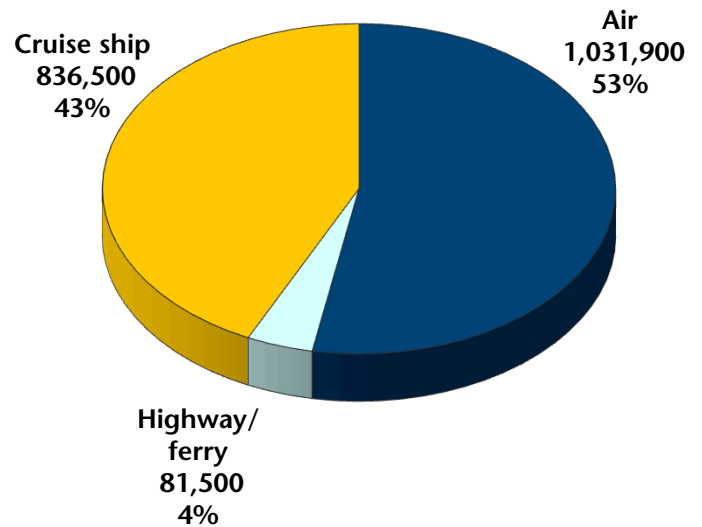
Sources: 2000-2004 data from *Alaska Visitor Arrivals* studies (conducted by Northern Economics, Inc.); 2004-2009 data based on 2006-07 visitor/resident ratios obtained for AVSP V (conducted by McDowell Group, Inc.).
Note: The apparent drop in visitation between 2003-04 and 2004-05 could be a reflection of updated data sources and ratios, rather than an actual decrease.

Full-Year Visitor Volume

Combining results of the Summer 2008 and Fall/Winter 2008-09 AVSP study periods, the volume of out-of-state visitors to Alaska for the 12-month period was 1,949,900 – a decrease of less than 1 percent from the previous 12-month period. The summer market (1,707,400) represented 88 percent of the annual volume; the winter market (242,500) represented 12 percent.

The chart at right shows the full-year volume by exit mode. Because some cruise ship passengers exit the state by airplane, the actual number of 2008 cruise ship passengers is higher than the exiting traffic (1,033,100 – or 53 percent of the full-year traffic).

Alaska Visitor Volume, May 2008-April 2009
By Exit Mode



Total Annual Visitor Volume:
1,949,900

Introduction

This report provides visitor volume estimates for Alaska between October 1, 2008 and April 30, 2009. Volume estimates are based on data collected for *Alaska Visitor Statistics Program V*, a study administered by the Alaska Office of Economic Development within the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. The estimates are compiled using two sets of data: exiting traffic data (ferry embarkations, airplane enplanements, and highway border crossings) and visitor/resident ratio data (the ratio of out-of-state visitors to Alaska residents exiting Alaska, by traffic mode, location, and month).

Fall/winter ratio data was collected during the AVSP V fall/winter study period, between October 1, 2006 and April 30, 2007. Nearly 30,000 travelers were tallied by survey field staff during this period. Ratios collected during 2006-07 were applied to 2008-09 traffic data to arrive at the estimates in this report.

A detailed description of the methodology employed in the visitor volume estimates can be found in the full AVSP V Summer and Fall/Winter reports, available at: www.dced.state.ak.us/oed/toubus/home.cfm

The AVSP V study team would like to acknowledge the following entities for their assistance with the project.

- Alaska Travel Industry Association
- Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport
- Fairbanks International Airport
- Alaska Airlines
- Alaska Marine Highway System
- Yukon Department of Tourism and Culture
- US Customs and Border Protection, Skagway border station

Visitor Volume, Fall/Winter 2008-09

Visitor Volume

Alaska received an estimated 242,500 out-of-state visitors between October 2008 and April 2009. The table below shows how visitor volume breaks down by the transportation mode used to exit the state. The vast majority of fall/winter visitors (95 percent) exited the state by air, accounting for 231,300 visitors. Most of the remaining visitors exited by highway (9,700, or 4 percent of visitors), with less than 1 percent (1,500) exiting by ferry. The pattern of exiting traffic in the fall/winter differs significantly from the summer, when 49 percent of visitors exit by cruise ship, 47 percent by air, and the remainder by highway or ferry.

Visitor Volume, by Exit Mode
AVSP V – Fall/Winter 2008-09

Exit Mode	Number of Visitors
Air	231,300
Highway	9,700
Ferry	1,500
Total	242,500

The most common trip purpose among fall/winter visitors is visiting friends or relatives, accounting for 102,500 visitors in 2008-09 (or 42 percent of the total). Nearly as large is the business-only market at 94,600 and 39 percent of visitors. Vacation/pleasure visitors accounted for 28,900 visitors (12 percent of the total), while business/pleasure visitors accounted for 16,500 visitors (7 percent of the total).

Visitor Volume, by Trip Purpose
AVSP V - Fall/Winter 2008-09

Trip Purpose	Number of Visitors
Visiting friends/relatives	102,500
Business	94,600
Vacation/pleasure	28,900
Business/pleasure	16,500
Total	242,500

Full Year Visitor Volume

The following table shows visitor volume for the 12-month period of May 2008 through April 2009, combining results from the Summer and Fall/Winter study periods. Nearly 2 million out-of-state visitors came to Alaska during the 12-month period, with 88 percent visiting during the five-month summer season. Out of the full-year visitor volume, 53 percent exited by air; 43 percent by cruise ship; 4 percent by highway; and less than 1 percent by ferry. (Note: The cruise ship figure in the table below reflects only passengers exiting the state via cruise ship. Because some cruise ship passengers exit the state by air, the actual number of passengers is higher, at 1,033,100. This figure represents 53 percent of the full-year visitor volume.)

Full Year Visitor Volume, by Exit Mode
AVSP V – 2008-09

	Summer 2008	Fall/Winter 2008-09	Full Year
Air	800,600	231,300	1,031,900
Cruise ship ¹	836,500	0	836,500
Highway	59,900	9,700	69,600
Ferry	10,400	1,500	11,900
Total	1,707,400	242,500	1,949,900

¹ The total number of cruise ship visitors to Alaska in Summer 2008 was 1,033,100. See the AVSP Summer 2008 report for further details on summer visitor volume.

Visitor Volume Trends

Visitor Volume

The table below shows trends in estimated visitor volume by mode of entry (2000-01 to 2003-04) and exit (2004-05 to 2006-07). The change from entry to exit methodology does not affect the data; virtually the same number of visitors entered Alaska as exited Alaska in any given year. The apparent drop in visitation between 2003-04 and 2004-05 (by 4.1 percent) could be a reflection of updated data sources and ratios, rather than an actual decrease. The volume reported for the first four study periods is based on ratios collected in 2000-2001, while the volume for the last four study periods is based on ratios collected in 2006-2007.

Fall/winter 2008-09 visitor traffic dropped by 2.0 percent from the previous year, largely attributable to a 1.9 percent decrease in air enplanements. Domestic air exits declined by 1.3 percent, while international air exits dropped by 24 percent. (Readers are reminded that the international visitor market uses domestic air as well as international air to exit Alaska.)

Highway visitors dropped by 4.0 percent. Personal vehicle traffic was down at all three highway borders (Haines, Skagway, and Alcan) continuing a downward trend of several years. While ferry traffic increased at both Bellingham and Prince Rupert, they only represent approximately 100 additional visitors out of the total 242,500 volume.

Trends in Fall/Winter Visitor Volume, By Entry/Exit Mode, 2000-01 to 2008-09 AVSP V

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	% change
Air	238,700	235,500	237,100	241,500	234,100	231,800	237,600	235,900	231,300	-1.9%
Highway	14,000	13,800	13,900	13,900	10,800	9,900	10,300	10,100	9,700	-4.0%
Ferry	1,500	1,600	1,600	1,700	1,600	1,500	1,600	1,400	1,500	+7.1%
Total	254,200	250,900	252,600	257,100	246,500	243,200	249,500	247,400	242,500	-2.0%
% change	n/a	-1.3%	+0.7%	+1.8%	-4.1%	-1.3%	+2.6%	-0.8%	-2.0%	

Note: 2000-01 to 2003-04 data based on entry mode; 2004-05 to 2008-09 data based on exit mode.

Sources: 2000-01 to 2003-04 data from *Alaska Visitor Arrivals* studies (conducted by Northern Economics, Inc.); 2004-05 to 2008-09 data based on 2006-07 visitor/resident ratios obtained for AVSP V (conducted by McDowell Group, Inc.).

Full-Year Visitor Volume

The table below shows trends in estimated visitor volume for the 12-month period between May and April. Full-year visitation increased from 1.5 million in 2001-02 to nearly 2 million in 2008-09, with a slight drop (0.6 percent) between 2007-08 and 2008-09. This is the first drop in full-year visitation since AVSP IV was conducted in 2001.

The data shows a large increase between 2004-05 and 2005-06. This growth is partly attributable to updated data sources and methodology. The data between May 2001 and September of 2004 was based on visitor/resident ratios collected between October 2000 and September 2001, while the data between October 2004 and April 2008 was based on ratios collected between May 2006 and April 2007. For more information on the differences between the two sets of data, please refer to the Summer AVSP 2006 report.

Trends in Full-Year Visitor Volume, By Entry/Exit Mode, 2001-02 to 2008-09 AVSP V

Entry/Exit	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Air	824,400	831,400	834,400	869,700	1,018,500	1,033,500	1,047,200	1,031,900
Cruise ship	510,000	581,000	620,900	712,400	761,100	758,100	827,800	836,500
Highway	100,500	96,800	94,300	94,000	82,000	76,100	74,400	69,600
Ferry	18,800	18,400	17,600	17,800	13,600	13,300	12,100	11,900
Total	1,453,700	1,527,600	1,567,200	1,693,900	1,875,200	1,881,000	1,961,500	1,949,900
% change	n/a	+5.1%	+2.6%	+8.1%	+10.7%	+0.3%	+4.3%	-0.6%

Notes: 2001-02 to 2004-05 data based on entry mode; 2005-06 to 2008-09 data based on exit mode.

The 2000-01 period is not included because there was no Summer 2000 visitor volume estimate.

Sources: 2001-02 to 2004-05 data from *Alaska Visitor Arrivals* studies (conducted by Northern Economics, Inc.); 2005-06 to 2008-09 data based on 2006-07 visitor/resident ratios obtained for AVSP V (conducted by McDowell Group, Inc.).

Total Traffic

“Total traffic” refers to the number of people exiting Alaska during the study period, including both Alaska residents and out-of-state visitors. These figures include passengers onboard planes exiting the state; passengers in vehicles crossing from Alaska to the Yukon on three highways (the Top of the World highway is closed in fall/winter); and passengers onboard Alaska Marine Highway vessels sailing from Alaska to Prince Rupert and Bellingham.

Total Traffic, by Exit Mode
AVSP V - Fall/Winter 2008-09

Exit Mode	Total Traffic
Air	709,400
Highway	35,900
Ferry	7,000
Total	752,300

Visitor/Resident Ratios

The following table shows the percentage of traffic for each exit mode that was out-of-state visitors in fall/winter 2008-09. These ratios are a composite of ratios collected by location, on a monthly basis. Because they were applied to traffic data on a monthly and by-location basis, applying them to overall traffic will not yield the same results. Details on how these ratios were collected and applied to traffic data can be found in the AVSP V Fall/Winter 2006-07 report.

It is important to note that the highway ratio refers to highway travelers who are exiting the state for the final time on their trip. This eliminates the possibility of double-counting visitors who exit the state twice – for example, ferry passengers who exit the state at Beaver Creek, then re-enter at Haines to board a ferry.

Visitor/Resident Ratios, by Mode
AVSP V - Fall/Winter 2008-09

Exit Mode	Percentage Visitors
Air	32.6%
Highway ¹	27.1%
Ferry	20.9%
Total	32.2%

¹ The highway ratio refers to “last-exit” visitors: not planning to re-enter Alaska on the same trip.